

Alturas Indian Rancheria GAP Narrative FY2014-15

The Alturas Indian Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe located near Alturas, California, in Modoc County. On the tribes 20-acre trust is located the Tribal Government Office, residential housing, a historical building and the Desert Rose Casino.

The tribes trust land is bounded on three sides by the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge which creates a special need to conduct high quality environmental protection for the Tribe and the refuges environment. In years past, the Tribe has cooperated with the Refuge to insure that nighttime lighting and other issues do not impact the Refuge. Likewise, the Refuge has worked to make sure run-off or water overflow does not inundate the Rancheria. The Tribe and the Refuge are dependent on each other as good neighbors to insure the good quality of life of continues. The Tribe first established an environmental program utilizing EPA GAP funding in October, 2013.

The funding from the General Assistance Program would provide critical funding to develop the Tribes capacity to insure the environs on and around the tribe are managed responsibly. The planned development of new housing units, need for wastewater treatment, develop access to clean water, assess planned contiguous land acquisition and finalize the cleanup of solid waste that was buried over a decade ago will require a careful and comprehensive environmental inventory and assessment, new ordinance and regulations to establish the ability to sustain the environment for generations to come. It will also assist the Tribe in continuing the relationship with Modoc National Wildlife Refuge. Since this narrative is being drafted at the close of the first quarter of the first GAP grant, only a portion of the work plan has been completed.

Progress thus far:

General Capacity Building:

Established a Tribal Environmental Office. The director has been hired, required equipment has been purchased, and monthly reporting protocol for the Tribal Business Committee review has been implemented. The director has attending two trainings, the 2013 GAP Workshop and one workshop on Federal Grant Accounting (this one was at no cost to the GAP grant).

Conduct an Environmental Inventory (now called a Baseline Assessment). The property was inspected with a tribal member who had been raised there, several sites were identified and recorded on a map. Local government agencies, USFS, USDA and Modoc County Agricultural Department were consulted for any records of pesticide, rodenticide or herbicide usage. The Open Dump Inventory Form was used for each of the sites (only the GIS mapping of each site is not done). At this time the exact nature of the any contamination is not completely known, a soil testing QAP must be developed to establish the exact nature of each dump.

Met with NRCS for 2014 EQIP grant.

Develop Administrative Capacity. The Tribe hired a professional CPA with over thirty years of tribal government and fund accounting experience. He is working with the accounting firm to make sure all required systems follow GAAP, OMB and Federal Grant Reporting standards. New chart of accounts and procedures for the Tribe have been implemented. The Administrative Assessment is still in progress.

For the 2014-15 GAP, the Tribe needs to build initial capacity in:

General Capacity Building:

With the completion of the ISWMP and the Baseline Needs Assessment, the Tribe needs an overall Environmental Ordinance. This will be developed with our Region 9 Project Officer in concert with the ETEP.

Develop Environmental Ordinance.

Develop and negotiate the ETEP.

Hire Environmental Technician

Water Quality Monitoring:

Bordering the Refuge land, this is a critical component to develop. Currently there is no discharge onto the Refuge; however, the aging septic system is not sustainable. The tribe will be applying in 2014 for grants to address the construction of new treatment facilities to provide safe drinking water. The GAP funding will allow the tribe to move toward developing sustainable “Asset Protection for Drinking Water” and “Wastewater”, including appropriate QAP for each. Research has also found that the slough which used to run year round (until the 1980’s) was unilaterally cut off from water flow by the Refuge without consulting the Tribe. Restoration of this water flow is a long term goal.

Identify problems with drinking water, determine what agency to apply. Identify if CWA wetlands grant is needed for wetlands/slough restoration.

Solid Waste Activities:

Utilizing the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, the clean-up of the open dumps will be accomplished depending on funding. Since the ISWMP will be completed in 2014, this will allow integration into the Environmental Ordinance and ETEP.

Pollution Prevention:

Utilizing the ISWMP, *develop Pollution Prevention Ordinance.* Establish regulations for recycling, treatment, disposal, energy usage reduction and green practices.

Develop Pollution Prevention Ordinance.

Program for reduction of solid waste and recycling.

Continue Education and Outreach. Understand the nature of pesticides being used by other governmental agencies and how they impact the health of tribal members, visitors and the fish and animal population. Outreach and network with local agencies. Provide workshops for local community and school district.

The Tribal Environmental Director, Creig Marcus, reports to the Tribal Administrator, Wayne Smith, the Tribal Administrator reports to the Business Committee ("Tribal Council").

The Tribe has an existing ATTG (638) grant that funds the Tribal Administrator, Accounting and Grant Writer. The Tribe intends to pursue grants through NRCS and USDA to reestablish Cultural Important Native Plant Species, restore the slough and an organic, sustainable Community Garden. The GAP grant will support these activities through its ordinances and technical support from the EPA.